

~~INFORMATION SECRET REPORT~~

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

CONFIDENTIAL

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SUBJECT Shop Councils Lose Influence to SED
Factory Control Groups

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1. Since about August 1948, the functions of shop councils in the State of Saxony have been successively reduced to insignificant routine tasks. Representatives of shop councils complained that they are being branded quite openly by SED officials as reactionaries, saboteurs, and politically unreliable during meetings of employees. Such complaints had been aired at conferences of FDGB state leaders even before Chairman Eckart was expelled from the SED.
2. It is alleged that this development was due to the attempts of many shop councillors to stand up for their fellow workers and to obtain better working and living conditions for them. In some cases they threatened to strike against Russian orders. Such threats were uttered especially in connection with the following two major issues:
 - a. Time and again, shop councils asked for the improvement of food conditions for the workers. The councillors argued that the rations were definitely insufficient even for the more privileged employees of the Soviet AGs; that, therefore, fulfilment of production quotas was not in any way possible. How small these rations generally are, can be seen in the fact that even workers performing physically heavy labor (Schwerstarbeiter), who are eligible for the highest ration allowance, do not receive more than 1400 calories a day. Absentee figures usually amount to 20 per cent. despite the practice of physicians, who are specially appointed to check on sick absentees (Vertrauensärzte), and who are exclusively SED members, of sending all workers back to work within three days. As a rule, thirty per cent. of the women working in the Saxon textile industries are reported sick; in addition, it is a daily occurrence that workers collapse at their machines.
 - b. With increasing efforts, shop councillors have tried lately to prevent the compulsory labor draft of young workers. For that reason, attempts are being made to by-pass shop councils in the new drive for police recruits. The management of plants is ordered to place a certain percentage of their workers at disposal for this purpose. Since the workers hold the shop councils responsible for such action, councillors are especially interested

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in opposing these measures.

3. It is in the face of such opposition and activities that many of the duties customarily assigned to shop councils have been transferred to the political cells formed by the SPD within the individual plants. Reliable Communists are being selected to perform these tasks; they are released from their regular jobs in order to devote their full time to political activities within the plants. These persons are working directly under the political and economic officers of the SMA. Their foremost responsibilities are the fulfilment of the production quotas and, of course, political supervision of workers as well as management. Each week, a report in the form of a special questionnaire has to be filed with the Kreis Komendatura.

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